In The Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A system for manipulating image data, comprising:

a data source configured to store one or more ancillary data files, said data source being implemented as a computer in a distributed computer network;

an imaging device configured to capture said image data; and

an ancillary data module for transferring said one or more ancillary data files from said data source to said imaging device for manipulating said image data, said ancillary data module performing one or more on-line management procedures regarding said ancillary data files while an active communication path exists from said imaging device to said computer in said distributed computer network.

2.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said data source includes one of [[a]] said computer in [[a]] said distributed computer network, an image station site on an Internet network, a stand-alone computer device, a portable electronic device, and a removable non-volatile memory device.

3.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said ancillary data files include at least one of an image template file, a text overlay file, an image background file, an Internet webpage file, and a program instruction file.

4.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said imaging device includes at least one of a digital still camera device, a video camera device, and an electronic scanner device.

5.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said one or more ancillary data files are transferred from said data source to said imaging device by utilizing at least one of a wireless transmission process and a hard-wired transmission process.

6.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said ancillary data module manipulates said image data by combining selected ones of said ancillary data files with said image data to generate new composite data.

7.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said imaging device includes at least one of a capture subsystem and a control module, said control module having at least one of a central processing unit, a memory, a viewfinder, and one or more input/output interfaces.

8.   (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein said memory includes at least one of an application software program, an operating system, said ancillary data module, said one or more ancillary data files, a display manager, data storage for storing said image data, and one or more camera menus for display upon said viewfinder.

9.   (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein said one or more input/output interfaces include at least one of a distributed electronic network interface, a host computer interface, a printer interface, a wireless communications interface, a user interface, and a removable storage media interface.

10.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said ancillary data module includes at least one of a download manager for transferring said ancillary data files from said data source to said imaging device and analyzing said ancillary data files, an editing module for combining said one or more ancillary data files with said image data, a data manager for controlling and reorganizing said one or more ancillary data files, and miscellaneous routines that include a conversion routine for translating said one or more ancillary data files into a compatible format.

11.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said one or more ancillary data files each include a data portion and a corresponding descriptor tag that is analyzed by said ancillary data module to identify, characterize, and categorize a corresponding one of said one or more ancillary data files.

12.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said one or more ancillary data files are created by at least one of a system user on a local computer device and a system manufacturer utilizing ancillary-data production equipment.

13.   (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said data source is configured to facilitate interactively accessing, manipulating, and downloading said one or more ancillary data files to said imaging device by a system user.

14.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said imaging device establishes [[an]] said active communication path to said data source, said active communication path being established by at least one of an automatic connection protocol and a user-initiated connection protocol.

15.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14 wherein said ancillary data module performs <u>said</u> one or more on-line management procedures while said active communication path is available, said one or more on-line management procedures including at least one of a data-source content review and an ancillary-data file download procedure.

16.   (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein said ancillary data module downloads a special instruction file that corresponds to a selected ancillary data file, said special instruction file including information that instructs said imaging device how to correctly utilize said selected ancillary data file, said special instruction file being formatted as at least one of an embedded instruction file that is embedded in said selected ancillary data file and a discrete instruction file that is not embedded in said selected ancillary data file.

17.   (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein said imaging device terminates said active communication path to said data source when said on-line management procedures have been completed, said active communication path being terminated by at least one of an automatic termination protocol and a user-initiated termination protocol.

18.   (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein said ancillary data module performs an off-line management procedure for said one or more ancillary data files that have been downloaded from said data source, said off-line management procedure including a file descriptor identification procedure by which said ancillary data module categorizes said one or more ancillary data files, said imaging device responsively updating camera menus to include said one or more ancillary data files to thereby enable a system user to utilize said one or more ancillary data files.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein said off-line management procedure includes at least one of a file reorganization procedure and a file deletion procedure.

20. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein said imaging device utilizes an editing module from said ancillary data module to effectively combine selected ones of said one or more ancillary data files with one or more images from said image data to thereby create a new composite image..

21. (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating image data, comprising the steps of:

> storing one or more ancillary data files in a data source, said data source being implemented as a computer in a distributed computer network;
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> capturing said image data with an imaging device;
>
> transferring said one or more ancillary data files from said data source to said imaging device by using an ancillary data module; and
>
> manipulating said image data with said one or more ancillary data files, said ancillary data module performing one or more on-line management procedures regarding said ancillary data files while an active communication path exists from said imaging device to said computer in said distributed computer network.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein said data source includes one of [[a]] said computer in [[a]] said distributed computer network, an image station site on an Internet network, a stand-alone computer device, a portable electronic device, and a removable non-volatile memory device.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said ancillary data files include at least one of an image template file, a text overlay file, an image background file, an Internet webpage file, and a program instruction file.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said imaging device includes at least one of a digital still camera device, a video camera device, and an electronic scanner device.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said one or more ancillary data files are transferred from said data source to said imaging device by utilizing at least one of a wireless transmission process and a hard-wired transmission process.

26. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said ancillary data module manipulates said image data by combining selected ones of said ancillary data files with said image data to generate new composite data.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said imaging device includes at least one of a capture subsystem and a control module, said control module having at least one of a central processing unit, a memory, a viewfinder, and one or more input/output interfaces.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27 wherein said memory includes at least one of an application software program, an operating system, said ancillary data module, said one or more ancillary data files, a display manager, data storage for storing said image data, and one or more camera menus for display upon said viewfinder.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27 wherein said one or more input/output interfaces include at least one of a distributed electronic network interface, a host computer interface, a printer interface, a wireless communications interface, a user interface, and a removable storage media interface.

30. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said ancillary data module includes at least one of a download manager for transferring said ancillary data files from said data source to said imaging device and analyzing said ancillary data files, an editing module for combining said one or more ancillary data files with said image data, a data manager for controlling and reorganizing said one or more ancillary data files, and miscellaneous routines that include a conversion routine for translating said one or more ancillary data files into a compatible format.

31. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said one or more ancillary data files each include a data portion and a corresponding descriptor tag that is analyzed by said ancillary data module to identify, characterize, and categorize a corresponding one of said one or more ancillary data files.

32. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said one or more ancillary data files are created by at least one of a system user on a local computer device and a system manufacturer utilizing ancillary-data production equipment.

33. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said data source is configured to facilitate interactively accessing, manipulating, and downloading said one or more ancillary data files to said imaging device by a system user.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein said imaging device establishes [[an]] said active communication path to said data source, said active communication path being established by at least one of an automatic connection protocol and a user-initiated connection protocol.

35.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34 wherein said ancillary data module performs said one or more on-line management procedures while said active communication path is available, said one or more on-line management procedures including at least one of a data-source content review and an ancillary-data file download procedure.

36.   (Original) The method of claim 35 wherein said ancillary data module downloads a special instruction file that corresponds to a selected ancillary data file, said special instruction file including information that instructs said imaging device how to correctly utilize said selected ancillary data file, said special instruction file being formatted as at least one of an embedded instruction file that is embedded in said selected ancillary data file and a discrete instruction file that is not embedded in said selected ancillary data file.

37.   (Original) The method of claim 35 wherein said imaging device terminates said active communication path to said data source when said on-line management procedures have been completed, said active communication path being terminated by at least one of an automatic termination protocol and a user-initiated termination protocol.

38.   (Original) The method of claim 37 wherein said ancillary data module performs an off-line management procedure for said one or more ancillary data files that have been downloaded from said data source, said off-line management procedure including a file descriptor identification procedure by which said ancillary data module categorizes said one or more ancillary data files, said imaging device responsively updating camera menus to include said one or more ancillary data files to thereby enable a system user to utilize said one or more ancillary data files.

39.   (Original) The method of claim 38 wherein said off-line management procedure includes at least one of a file reorganization procedure and a file deletion procedure.

40.   (Original) The method of claim 38 wherein said imaging device utilizes an editing module from said ancillary data module to effectively combine selected ones of said one or more ancillary data files with one or more images from said image data to thereby create a new composite image.

41.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising program instructions for manipulating image data by performing the steps of:

storing one or more ancillary data files in a data source, said data source being implemented as a computer in a distributed computer network;

capturing said image data with an imaging device;

transferring said one or more ancillary data files from said data source to said imaging device by using an ancillary data module; and

manipulating said image data with said one or more ancillary data files, said ancillary data module performing one or more on-line management procedures regarding said ancillary data files while an active communication path exists from said imaging device to said computer in said distributed computer network.

42.   (Original) A system for manipulating image data, comprising:

means for storing one or more ancillary data files;

means for capturing said image data;

means for transferring said one or more ancillary data files from said means for storing to said means for capturing; and

means for manipulating said image data with said one or more ancillary data files.